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PAMPHLETS FOR THE TIMES

No. 1

# Citizenship in Modern India

Kanakarayan T. Paul, B.A., L.T., O.B.E.

"No form of provincial or central government which is organised 'merely' from above, however mechanically and ideally perfect, can be a living and healthy growth, unless it can draw its sustenance from the ever-growing subsoil of a people's political instincts, habits, and traditions as expressed in the indigenous local bodies, the natural foundations of *all* government. Political reconstruction must recognise its limiting conditions." Radhakrishnan  
Mookerji, M.A., Ph.D., Vidyavabdhava.

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## Citizenship in Modern India<sup>1</sup>

THE Hindu child is born clothed with certain inalienable duties. They relate him in very definite terms to his parents and ancestors, to his family and caste, to religion and to the sect in which he is born, and to the village or urban community of which he is by birth a member. The sanctions which hold him to them are those of religion and society. Till British-made law prevailed in the country, the entire "citizenship" of a Hindu was an interwoven part of the very comprehensive texture of this natal garb, which is called *his Dharma*. It is important to understand its features before we can profitably discuss the transformation to which Indian citizenship has been summoned, and the problems which the process entails.

To begin with, it should be realized that *Dharma* is of a very great age, during which its wonderful vitality has stood numerous storms and profited by them all. *Arthashastra*<sup>2</sup> and *Manavadharmashastra*<sup>3</sup> are dated anterior to the second century before Christ, and they must have codified what was already well established as long-standing custom. The political history of India, from Chandragupta to Victoria, was a series of invasions and wars, seldom broken in any part of India by a peace of fifty years. But turn from the political history to the history of the people, and you are in a totally different world. Great religions rise and spread through the land, great universities flourish, drawing students from every part of the country, whole languages are born and issue in literatures of infinite beauty and power, and social systems are evolved whose influence penetrate beyond barriers of mountains, rivers and primeval forests. Imagine a student without any knowledge of the political

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the Y.M.C.A., National Convention on Nov. 6th, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> P. 43, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, by J. N. Arquhar.

<sup>3</sup> P. 81, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, by J. N. Arquhar.



history of India, starting with Gautama Buddha,<sup>1</sup> and following the life streams of the people of India through a thousand years to Sankara,<sup>2</sup> then three centuries more to Ramanuja,<sup>3</sup> on through five hundred years of the activities and the inter-activities of the Vedantins and the Bhaktas to Kabir,<sup>4</sup> Chaitanya<sup>5</sup> and Nanak,<sup>6</sup> still onward through the clashes of the Saivites and the Vaishnavites down to the first indication of European influence in Ram Mohan Roy,<sup>7</sup> he cannot but imagine that the people of India had the blessing of a Pax Britannica for 2,500 years. The secret of this stability possibly unique in the world, is to be found in the effective hold of *grahastadharma* on millions of Hindus through twenty-five centuries of a most chequered political history. It bent before every storm, only to rear its head with added strength for the next trial. In such adjustments important provincial diversities have necessarily developed. But the essential secret of its strength and the fundamental features of its character remained the same as when in the early days of its origin it got the mighty reinforcement of the doctrine of *karma*.

*Dharma* (or *Arma*, as it is called in the south) has two distinguishing features: (1) *Dharma* is Duty and not Right (2) It is enforced by the will of society and not by the authority of a central government. In both these particulars it differs radically from the conception of citizenship in the west.

1. Duty may be said to be only a transposed definition of Right. But it is not necessarily so. The Right which is implied by *Dharma* is, in most cases, the Right of the community or religion and not of an individual, and in many cases without any correlating rights accruing to an individual. Also, a world of difference arises from the radical difference in the conception of Law.

Take the example of the teacher and the pupil. The *Dharma* of the teacher is conceived as his duty to impart the knowledge he has received. Corollary: fees cannot be charged. Conversely, the *Dharma* of the pupil may at first

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<sup>1</sup> 525 B.C. *circ.* <sup>2</sup> 788-850 A.D. <sup>3</sup> 1100 A.D. *circ.* <sup>4</sup> 1440-1518 A.D. <sup>5</sup> 1485-1533 A.D. <sup>6</sup> 1468-1538 A.D. <sup>7</sup> 1772-1833 A.D.

sight appear as only a catalogue of the rights of the teacher ; but a moment's consideration will reveal what is definitely and indelibly in the sub-consciousness of the Hindu pupil's mind, that it is the sacred vesture with which he is clothed during the state of his *brahmachari asrama*, and which will leave him automatically, but only when he must don the *grahastadharna* at an older age. It is just his duty to acquire knowledge. Corollary : his attitude is the same to every possible source of knowledge and discipline, beginning with the father, and he continually seeks the best source available in the land.

2. The other distinguishing feature is in the sanction which enforces *Dharma*. The foundation of Western jurisprudence is on the necessity of compelling force. If Hindu culture had depended on any such evanescent foundation it would have had no existence beyond a century or two. The genius of the Hindu mind, purified by philosophy and chastened by religious discipline, went instinctively for a more abiding foundation. Society is natural, whereas the State is artificial. The State was, therefore, made a part of Society and not Society made dependent on the State. The State may arise and dissolve, may change its character, is never dependable. The State was provided with a place in *Dharma*, and *Dharma* itself was put on natural foundations. The social system, which natural causes were already bringing into being, was utilised as the basis whereon to establish all civic responsibility in a vital and normal relationship to it. The "sanction" for the observance of *Dharma* was found in "common consent." The conscience was enlightened by religious teaching and enlivened by religious doctrine, and in this manner a public opinion was ensured in the community, powerful enough to secure a general observance of *Dharma*.

The other day a British General made a public statement that "The Asiatic understands nothing but force," displaying a profound ignorance of the facts of Indian history for twenty-five centuries down to this day. When for generations central governments confined themselves to the collection of taxes and the levying of forces, neglecting even the elementary duty of policing the country for safety of property and person,

the entire internal economy of the country, comprising Education, Poor Relief, Irrigation and other Public Works, Sanitation, Watch and Ward, and the Administration of Justice, was carried on by the *Dharma* of the people themselves. The same type of central government and by the same Turkoman or very similar races prevailed in that equally large area, from the Punjab to the Mediterranean, from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf. There were many diversities of people in that area, as also mighty natural resources. If, in comparison, it is the record of Indian citizenship that is a brilliant contribution to the treasures of the human race, where is the secret to be found except in the genius of her people? The enormous volume of work so carried on is narrated by competent British authorities in the classical *Fifth Report*<sup>1</sup> to the House of Commons, in the monumental volumes of B. H. Baden-Powell,<sup>2</sup> in the numerous *District Gazetteers* in which the Civil Service has with magnificent patience studied the whole of British India, and in the many occasional surveys carried out by the Provincial Governments. The masterly summary in Dr. John Matthai's *Monograph Village Government in India*<sup>3</sup> shows how extensive and how deep is, after a century and more of the impact of British law and its disintegrating consequences. Every Hindu knows in his own heart and mind that the sources from which it once issued to pervade the whole realm of life is still there in the centre of his personality. The statement of the general is rather applicable to Europe, where no law or right seems to be understood, except with the indispensable Austinian minimum of force.

## II

To-day problems arise because this hoary system is subjected to certain pervasive and penetrating influences from the West. It is well to realize clearly what these influences are :

1. Undoubtedly the most potent of these influences are the idea of the Right of the Individual. "We look upon the

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Paper, 1812.

<sup>2</sup> *The Land Systems of British India*, 1892. *The Indian Village Community*, 1896.

<sup>3</sup> 1915. Fisher Unwin.

State," says Mr. A. C. Bradley, "as a contrivance for securing (to the individual citizen) the enjoyment of his liberty and the opportunity of pursuing his ends, a contrivance which involves some limitation of his rights, and ought to involve as little as possible. Even when reflection has shown us that there is something theoretically wrong with these ideas, we remain convinced that a happiness or a morality which is imposed upon us from without loses half its value, and that there are spheres of our life and parts of our inward experience into which no one ought to intrude. And if we feel strongly our unity with others, and are willing to admit that social and political institutions have a positive object and not the merely negative one of protection, we emphasize the fact that the character or happiness they are to promote are those of individuals."<sup>1</sup>

While this statement is not an exhaustive definition, it certainly indicates accurately the characteristic bias in the conception of the State as it was brought by the West to India. It was never pitted consciously and deliberately against the Hindu theory of Law and Society. In true British fashion things just went forward without any idea that there was anything else anywhere. The criminal law in entirety, and many important parts of civil law, were administered on this basis. And, with the continual extension of the jurisdiction of British-made law over the country and over many departments of life, the conflict of ideals became acute.

Each of the legal systems at conflict was doubtless equally desirous of securing the highest justice and equity possible: but they differed too radically in their conceptions of Man and Society. The advantage of the Western ideal was in its subtle appeal to the lower self in man. It needs no special argument to persuade man to fall in with an arrangement which ignores many of his obligations as a member of a social community, takes the view point of his Rights as against not only other individuals but even against the community, and even out to protect him from interference to the maximum extent possible. Its working hypothesis, in the words of Mr. C. Bradley, is that "the State is a mere organ of 'secular'

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<sup>1</sup> *Hellenica*, by A. C. Bradley.

force, . . . that law takes no account of character, and that government ought not to enforce morality or interfere with private life." <sup>1</sup> What wonder then that, taking human nature as it is, the fate of the Indian *Dharma* was doomed from the outset in the unequal struggle?

2. The adverse influence of British law was greatly aided by the methods used for its administration. The "common consent" which saw to the proper observance of *Dharma* was for the great bulk of the needs of man and the community sufficiently effective when expressed as the public opinion of the community; for the rest the *panchayat*, which the same *Dharma* set in motion, was almost all-powerful; and when very exceptional matters did go up to the courts of the central government, those courts were still instruments rather of conciliation than of adjudication, the personal element being nowhere absent in the legal processes. This system was generally considered to be so efficient and adequate that in the early years the officers of the East India Company seriously considered utilising it, and there was also more than one attempt to incorporate it by law into the new judicial system that was being established. All honour to those early administrators, like Sir Thomas Munro, who had the discernment to recognise its value, and the courage to make strenuous efforts to save it. But that was also a lost game. The objective law cannot help being vitally dependent on the substantive law which calls it into being. The ancient Indian judiciary is impossible with the Indian Penal Code or the Transfer of Property Act, and is totally inadequate for the demands of the Indian Evidence Act or the two Procedure Codes. Even if no law courts on the British model had been set up and the existing judicial machinery called upon to administer the new law, it would have completely broken down, or got so radically transformed as to have lost its essential character. As it was, the establishing of the District Munsiff's Court was itself a sufficient solvent of the bulk of the ancient machinery.

3. The newly-imported idea of individualism was expressed not only in Law and its Courts, but in every department of the civil administration which gradually came to cover the

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<sup>1</sup> *Hellenica*, by A. C. Bradley.

land. Its working hypothesis was that, for all works of public welfare and utility the services of the expert should be secured by the central government; the citizen doing no more than pay for the recruitment, training, supervision and retirement of the expert who serves him. Outside paid professional service was the method of its organization: voluntary self-help was the system which it displaced.

As between the two systems, the former has the score for efficiency and economy. The latter is amateurish; it is bound to be wasteful. On the other hand, all the moral values are with the latter. The former is excellent machinery; the latter is a human service.

There were not wanting those among the early officers of the Company who urged that the existing machinery should be utilised, developed and brought into line with the needs of the changing conditions. When, for example, a specific question was asked as to whether *kudimaramath* (voluntary maintenance of "minor" irrigation works) should be left to the village community, as it had been for many centuries, or the responsibility commuted as a village cess, the answer of most experienced and successful administrators was decidedly in favour of the voluntary system.<sup>1</sup> Probably there is no country in the world, including Britain itself, where civil administration covers so many of the needs of the citizen or is carried out with the same thoroughgoing "efficiency." Many things, which in the West are done by private enterprise and which in India used to be done by the people themselves, are undertaken in this country by the State, and, thanks to its perfect organization as a bureaucracy, they are done with exemplary efficiency. They may not all be up to date when compared with the progress made in particular directions in particular countries of the world: as, for instance, say, Rural Education in the United States of America, or Sugar Production in the Dutch East Indies, but so far as the solid quality of organization and administration go, the State enterprise in India may be acknowledged as the last word.

Such a record could not possibly have been achieved except through the creation of the professional expert who must for-

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Public Works Commission. Report of the Madras Forest Committee, 1913.

ever be an outsider to the social unit, the members of which he serves. He knows so much more and he does so much better, that the principle underlying the system has necessarily undermined the contrary principle from which *Dharma* had developed.

4. I venture to say that if we had had no more than the three innovations mentioned—Law, Judicial System and Administrative Machinery—even the then disintegration of the ancient Indian social system would have been absolutely certain. But there were two more-powerful agencies in store.

One of these was the education in Western science, history and literature. English education is so very thinly spread over India that an outsider may question if it can already have powerful influence over such an ancient and essential characteristic of Indian life as *Dharma*. But India has in every generation been led by its *literati*. The successful hold of *Dharma* itself, through many centuries of clash and conflict, was due very largely to the place of power allowed to the *literati* in the life and thought of the masses. To educate a few is, in India, to ensure the effective dissemination among the great masses of the ideas which the *literati* have grasped, especially the ideas which pertain to what may be called the non-material plane of life and society. The enormous influence which the English-educated few exercise over the masses throughout India is not adequately understood, and, till recently, the fact of it was firmly denied by those who could not see it or would not wish it. The leadership of the *literati* is entirely in consonance with India's most ancient traditions. The tragedy is that the leadership secured to the new *literati* by *Dharma* has undermined the very principle of society through which *Dharma* accorded it the leadership.

The message of English education which has penetrated most effectively into Indian consciousness, was what it learnt as regards Man and Society, Citizen and State, as regards equality, liberty, possibility and opportunity, couched in accurate narratives of what other nations have achieved and suffered for the achievement, and set forth in beautiful literary forms as the choice spirits in every nation poured out their hearts in the course of such achievement. The new *literati* of India became in a moment, as it were, the "heirs of all the

Ages" and felt they were, or ought to be, in the "vanguard of Time."

If the new system of education had been harmonised with the ancient culture in the land, the verdure of our March should have issued normally from the disciplinary hold of the rigours of our own December.<sup>1</sup> But the new education was only too thoroughly after the trend of the superficial judgments of Macaulay's Minute. It was, and is still, unrelated to the past, or even to the present, life of the country. It only opens the floodgates wide over the country through every individual mind which takes advantage of it. There is no attempt anywhere made by it to regulate the flow or to determine the channels of irrigation. Just as inundation happens every time, submerging fair things with the foul ones, dissolving seed grain with the manure heaps.

The first to go was the authority of the old *literati* over almost all but religious matters. With that snapped social solidarity, and thereby the only agency available for education in citizenship has been seriously neglected in utter ignorance of its value. Many lessons conveyed by the new learning seemed to be clearly in condemnation of caste and *Dharma*. There was nothing in the new education to enable its votary to discriminate the valuable elements from the really worthless factors. Much less did that education afford any discipline to work out an evolution of *Dharma* in the light of Western thought.

5. One more of these unsettling influences should be mentioned—the latest, and, perhaps, the most powerful of them all. It is the rise of an Indian Nationalism.

India has been for centuries undoubtedly a unity: but the nature of that unity was never political. It was in the more abiding plane of mind rather than of matter, and it expressed itself in religion, philosophy, literature and in the social fabric. The unity of India had never been symbolised in a political power co-extensive with the compelling dominance of its culture.

The idea of an Indian Nation on the model of the nations of the West is one of the direct and immediate results of a system of education which has ever been unrelated to the

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<sup>1</sup> *Cycle of Spring*, by Rabindranath Tagore.



culture of the country. We were taken to the top of a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of this earth, and were told : " If you fall down and worship me, you too can have an empire." What wonder that the situation is delirious and the effects unsettling beyond limit ?

The idea of a wordly empire is not foreign to Hindu *Dharma* : it is, in fact, the very *Dharma* of the Kshatriya, and finds a well-defined place in the comprehensive regulations of Society. But the absorption of the average citizen in the idea and in the practical implications of an Indian Nation is absolutely new. That, also, is bound to have come in time, but by way of an evolution from the bottom, where a solid plinth of democracy should have been first reared. For such a structure there were ample foundations, well and truly laid in the bedrocks of Society and of individual personality ; the monsoon has, however, come as a sudden cyclone, as is only too often the case in our peninsular situation !

Among the many causes which are answerable to it, one may be cited, in particular, as throwing a searchlight across a highly complex situation. It is the Russo-Japanese War. The effect of that war was a great revolution, a great disillusionment. Here was a sister Eastern race, whose culture, art and history were the admiration of Europe. And yet it was never accorded a real place of equality until it could by physical force defeat one of the so-called " Great Powers." This was to India a startling indication of what seemed, without doubt, to be the real *criteria* of equal fellowship in the minds of the Western nations. If India achieved great things in the past, if mighty possibilities are still throbbing in her being, how can she come to her own except by following the methods which led to the recognition of Japan ? This was the invitation to fall down and worship—to sell our birthright for a mess of pottage ; and readers of Rabindranath Tagore's writings need no reminder that the situation is a conflict of ideals in which there is the greatest risk of India losing her spiritual heritage.

### III

The present situation is a chaos. Of high purpose and earnest enterprise there is no lack. Of the numbers of sincere

patriots who are all the time sacrificing many things for India, there is no lack either. But there is no map anywhere of the sea in which we are trying at present to navigate, and no hand of undoubted authority at the helm. We are without knowledge and without leaders.

The *Swaraj* we have desired is conceived all the time as the freeing of the land from the foreign *raj*. We have not yet begun to realize that *Swaraj* cannot be bureaucracy either, that responsibility means that we, the few who think and fight, are creating a new set of masters, our own voters. This essential democratic spirit has yet to arrive. It is more near to the old *Dharma* than to the principles underlying the bureaucracy which we wish to end merely because it is foreign, but which we will undoubtedly copy for the simple reason that we have neither the knowledge nor the training to do any better.

Then, again, there is far too much absorption still in all-India politics, while the work of the day next our very doors lies undone, until the Government perhaps sends along one more professional man! The old *Dharma* continually directed us to our duties to our own neighbourhood. Now it is shrinking farther and farther into the family hearth, and threatens to get lost in the rank individualism which is only too often confounded with Western civilization.

The politics which absorb us largely, perhaps even mainly, pertain to the machinery of Government. The machinery is only a means to an end. The purpose of the State, to quote Aristotle, is "to secure the noble living" of our people. In the fight for the machinery we have forgotten its purpose. We want the machinery in our own hands. It were better at the same time to investigate the high purpose for which it is intended. There will be a revelation, then, of the unsuitability or the inadequacy of a good deal of that machinery. It is much more important that machinery be precisely suited to the purpose than that it should be handled by us and not by the foreigner.

Further, our political effort is still unfortunately absorbed all too much in vindicating national honour and in preventing national injury. Nothing helps mutual understanding so effectively as frank outspokenness, and there is a real call to-day

to protest and proclaim. When all that is done, surely it is self-respecting to turn all our energies to that constructive service which we want done without any more foreign help. There is still no realization of vast spaces of such service that are silently awaiting the arrival of workers.

The situation is serious. It is not a whit short of revolution. It means patient analysis, scientific study, and humble toil.

We may begin by asking certain questions of ourselves.

1. What is civic responsibility in India to-day ?

To the many thousands it means no more than "to pay taxes, to fulfil legal contracts, to keep on the safe side of the Indian Penal Code (!), and, since the India Act of 1920, to record one's vote if sufficiently pestered by a candidate !"

2. What is it to be patriotic or public-spirited ?

"To read the Indian periodicals, to discuss their contents at the Club, to attend political meetings, if possible (at considerable expense and inconvenience) at a provincial or national centre, and to taboo what from time to time becomes the things for a 'Home Ruler' to eschew."

This is absolutely no caricature. It is only a most penitent confession.

Let us go back fifty years and ask the same questions of our fathers.

1. What is civic responsibility in India to-day ?

The answer would have been, without any hesitation : "To discharge with a clear conscience all those duties of neighbourliness prescribed for me by my caste *dharma*"; and these would have included the support of public services, including the schoolmaster, voluntary labour in emergencies, participation in the administration of justice, care of the poor, the unfortunate, the widow ; often times also the duty to apprentice the orphan.

2. What then is it to be public-spirited in India to-day ?

The answer, again, would have been splendid : "To watch for and help in preventing any calamity which may come on the community, to look out for and bring into the community all the religious and cultural influences which can be so netted in, to give generously out of my hard-won earnings for founding philanthropic institutions, schools, inns, temples, etc."

Here, again, is no exaggeration, but a proud and grateful acknowledgment of sober facts.

But we cannot go back fifty years. We do not wish to do so. At the same time, to stay where we are now is untenable, is absolutely suicidal. We *must* move forward, fifty years *per saltum*. We wish most ardently that the severe disillusionments of 1920 will be construed as a challenge to all sons of India to a clear vision and a courageous obedience to a new *Dharma of Citizenship*, which will be a harmonizing of the two great ideals: *Dharma* of India and Citizenship of the Christian West.

The content of the ancient *Dharma* has been clearly superseded. It is no longer adequate for modern conditions. Our 7,00,000 of villages are rapidly becoming suburbs in a great nation-wide urban organization on very modern lines, and our caste system has been cut right across by the unassailable truths of human equality and brotherhood. But the great moral principle of duty which *Dharma* enshrined inviolate for twenty-five centuries is still with us in the family, and that should be saved. As our fathers, we, too are born with inalienable duties, so clothed by God, the Father of our race. These duties were written on the conscience of our ancestors by the history and the discipline of their times. So also is it with us. We have more freedom in some ways, and greater constraint in others. But the duties are there all the same, and the purpose is the same, "the securing of the noble" living of our people.

The sooner we give up starting from the idea of Rights, the better it will be for India. There can be nothing more un-Indian or less consistent with true ethical standards. For Right, from its inception, depends on the substance of Might, and the history of the conceptions and the competition which lead Europe to August, 1914, have revealed for all time the only goal to which such an ideal can lead when it is left to itself. Nearer home the history of Japan is also full of lessons in the same subject. Let us rather discern that the latest verdict of European history is a striking approximation to our ancient heritage of *Dharma*. Sir Henry Jones, who passed through the ordeal of the war, writes as follows:—  
 "The State is the citizen writ large, and the citizen is the

State writ small. There is, in the final resort, no good State except where there are good citizens nor good citizens except in a good State. Every citizen is responsible for his State; and the State is responsible for every one of its citizens. If his personal freedom is limited, either by its laws or through the obstruction of his fellows; if he lives under a tyranny and amongst bad neighbours, it is at once *his* misfortune and *his* fault. And, on the other hand, if the means of the best life are not within reach of every one of the citizens of a State, the State is responsible, and it is imperfect and insecure. The government under which a people lives is, in the last resort, a reflexion of their own character; if it is tyrannical it is because they have loved freedom too little and suffered too little to attain it. They are participants in its wrongs, and have riveted their own chains."<sup>1</sup>

The new content of *Dharma* can be no other than the "citizenship" as understood in the truest democratic communities of the West. The old content of *Dharma* has been knocked out by Western ideas. But any Western idea cannot be allowed to fill the vacancy. We can only permit what can be an adequate substitute.

It is the ideal of equality and brotherhood that helped to drive out the former content of *Dharma*. We cannot now permit class feeling, bureaucratic efficiency, or official formalism to take its place, any more than permit anarchy or individualism to do so.

The greatest word in the great "Declaration of August 20th" is the word RESPONSIBILITY. It is in the context a synonym for Democracy. But synonym is richer, more comprehensive, and more beautiful than what it undoubtedly indicates: for it is human, even personal. Democracy has often in history stultified itself by becoming either wooden or tyrannical. Responsibility is more near *Dharma*, and it can possibly be kept fresh and sweet.

We *have* to go to the West for getting the new content for our ancient *Dharma*: and we need not be ashamed of it either. If we can furnish the *Dharma*, ours is the more estimable contribution. The West started ahead of us in a material civilization which called for organization of living

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<sup>1</sup> *The Principles of Citizenship*, pp. 109, 110.

conditions on a large scale ; it der nature and learnt of its secrets, human comfort and well being. The economic conditions which this has entailed hold us already in their grip. They are quite capable of bringing in their train much social injustice and many lapses from ethical standards. The West at its best is Christian, and has had the opportunity to adjust itself to these dangers, and at its best *has* evolved a citizenship which can successfully cope with such dangers. It is obviously our duty to learn these secrets in the same way, as we have not hesitated to learn those other secrets which the West has worked out in the laboratory, in the observatory, and under the microscope.

The *Dharma* of citizenship, understood in this manner, would relate me first, and perhaps to the last, to my own place, the city or town or village where I live. To make that as perfect as human effort and scientific knowledge can do becomes my objective. I should endeavour to bring to it the great volume of experience which the world has anywhere achieved. My responsibility extends to every community, the most needy first. It relates to every need of the community, economic, educational, health, vocational moral—none too low for me and none so high that I cannot do my bit for it. It addresses itself to the child as to the adult, to woman as to man.

It drives me first to study my field, to inspire my neighbours to a holy unrest, to collect my fellow-workers, to select our area, to conserve our resources of man-power, to educate public opinion there, to stabilise the shattering social fabric on such foundations as economic or civic or modern conditions provide, to continually study the methods successfully pursued elsewhere in India and abroad, to work, to save, to protect, to befriend,—in a word, to serve in every way possible “to secure the noble living” of my neighbours.

This conception of citizenship exalts the local as against the provincial or national services for example, in Council or Assembly. The great democracies of the West, Britain and America, indicate the same relative valuation. Even judged by money valuation, the revenue of the various official and voluntary local organizations far exceeded the national

resources of those countries before the abnormal disturbance of the war years.

It is citizenship of this type that can possibly build up the foundations of a true democracy. The education of the elector as regards provincial or national needs cannot begin before he has realized them in his own rural or urban area, and has engaged himself in the solution of the problems arising from them as member of a community to which he has definite obligations beyond what the mere law prescribes. What his forefathers did, as a matter of course, for many generations he can also do, provided he could be furnished with similar adequately informed leadership. It is a constituency so educated in practical local service and statesmanship that can determine the standards of the leadership adequate for larger and greater responsibilities.

Moreover, it is only a citizenship such as this that can adequately inform or suitably discipline the leadership needed for the provincial and national statesmanship. Exceptional men are doubtless born in the mysterious wisdom of Providence, gifted with rare poetic feeling, with the clear discernment of the seer, and also with the sagacity of statesmanship. But the work of 350 million people cannot wait for the chance of their arrival. It has been truly said that *the Hero* can only arise from a nation of heroes. Many village Hamptons had to be before a Hampton could do his duty aright at a national crisis. Not to have a testing and training ground for hard work, for constructive service, for the most difficult art of educating and carrying fellow-citizens in the plans and activities for their welfare, is to trust the destinies of the country to amateurs and theorists, and to those whose character has not been formed.

It was Plato who said that the "State is an educational institution, and in the last resort it has to teach only one thing: the nature of the good. It is to teach it so effectively that its members, on recognizing it, shall live for it." This was never more needed than in India to-day.

To recapitulate a few of the points in this paper—

The principle of *Dharma*, which conserved our culture through centuries of chaos, is a spiritual inheritance of infinite value.

Much of what *Dharma* secured, chiefly the social fabric which ensured our citizenship, is now hopelessly beyond recall.

The ideals of Western democracy, which we have so eagerly welcomed, have still to be translated into the life and practice of the great masses of our people.

With the disorganization of our social fabric the one available means is gone.

The reconstruction called for a *Dharma* of citizenship, for which is needed the leadership and service of all educated sons of India.

The main structure of it must necessarily be in the local centre—the town and village.

Such a practice and discipline of citizenship in this generation is indispensable for the future advance of India in its divinely-guided career and towards its God-appointed destiny.

If this is anything like a true analysis of the situation, the challenge is sure and unmistakable to every son of India whose patriotism constrains him to the dedication of his life to service. This is truly one of those rare occasions when we can hear distinctly the invitation of the Father. In noble words Tagore has voiced the ambition of our passionate patriotism :

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;  
Where knowledge is free ;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by  
narrow domestic walls ;  
Where words come out from the depth of truth ;  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit ;  
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening  
thought and action ;  
Into that heaven of Freedom, my Father, let my country  
awake.”

The great Father, whose care over India never lapsed in any of the periods of apparent conflict and chaos, responds by inviting us to be His fellow-workers : WHAT SHALL BE OUR RESPONSE ?









